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SUBJECT: Santiago Feb. 26 Media Report

Lead Story

¶1. President-elect Pinera condemned the death of Cuban dissident Orlando Zapata (All dailies, 2/26).

Cuba

¶2. Pinera's spokesperson issued the following statement: "President-elect Pinera expresses his most sincere condolences to the family of Cuban citizen and human rights defender Orlando Zapata, and also strongly condemns the circumstances of his death.... The president-elect joins those claiming for the immediate release of over 200 political prisoners still incarcerated in Cuba and calls to end all forms of political oppression in the island." In the statement, Pinera calls on Cuba to begin a process for the "peaceful reestablishment of democracy, rule of law, and to guarantee human rights and civil liberties."

Foreign Minister Mariano Fernandez said La Moneda hopes that the president-elect would refrain from commenting on international affairs until he is in office. "We are party to not interfering in other country's internal affairs. We condemn human rights violations in Cuba or in any other country, (but) in the places where it is appropriate, such as United Nations," said Fernandez (El Mercurio, 2/26).

¶3. Pinera's statement left La Moneda in an uncomfortable position, because it had not yet commented on Zapata's death (La Tercera, 2/26).

¶4. The Christian Democratic Party will file a bill with the Chamber of Deputies harshly condemning human rights violation in Cuba. The bill will also call on Bachelet to invite the leader of Cuba's dissidence, Oswaldo Paya, to Pinera's swearing-in ((El Mercurio, 2/26).

Obama - Argentina

¶5. Argentine President Cristian Fernandez told CNN that Barack Obama "was not meeting the region's expectations" and that there is a feeling that the United States has "missed opportunities." The Argentine president made the statements just a week before meeting with Secretary Hillary Clinton (Conservative, influential newspaper-of-record El Mercurio, 2/26).

¶6. Editorial on Argentina and the Malvinas: "Once more there is tension between Argentina and the U.K. over the Malvinas, the south Atlantic archipelago that was the scenario of a war between the two in 1982 But it seems that the Argentine government did not learn the lesson from that war... which is that the only possible path for Argentina to have any hope of recovering the islands it lost in 1833 is to engage in a constructive dialogue and negotiation. The solution is not pressuring and much less exacerbating differences that are politically and internally motivated" (Conservative, independent La Tercera, 2/26).

Pinera Administration

¶7. Pinera named the general manager of Copec fuels, Jorge Bunster, director of the Foreign Ministry's International Economic Relations Bureau (Direcon) (La Tercera, 2/26).
SIMONS